A Grammar of Tagdal: a Northern Songhay language

This book comprises a general synchronic description of Tagdal a Songhay-Berber mixed language spoken in the southeastern and central regions of the modern-day Republic of Niger. It begins with a summary of the historic and general sociolinguistic situation in Niger and how it affects speakers of Tagdal, followed by a description of the sound system, beginning with the consonant and vowel inventories, as well as some phonological processes shared by all varieties of Tagdal. One theme of historical significance is that the tonal system of the ancient mainstream Songhay language of northern Niger has been replaced with the stress system which exists today in Tagdal. The largest sections include a description of the grammar, starting with the morphology. The intricate interactions between stress placement, vowel and consonant length, and certain aspects of the morphology are described in detail. Special attention is given to the idea that Tagdal contains two prosodic sub-systems, one for vocabulary of Songhay origin and another for vocabulary of Berber-Tuareg origin. This leads to processes such as suppletion of Songhay cognates, with suppletive stems of Tuareg origin. The syntax of Tagdal is also described, including descriptions of how clauses are combined to form both simple and complex sentences. Attention is also paid to how Tagdal combines sentences into higher-level units such as paragraphs, sections and discourses.

ISBN 978-94-6093-393-6
DOI https://dx.medra.org/10.48273/LOT0608

:LOT Netherlands Graduate School of Linguistics
Landelijke Onderzoekschool Taalwetenschap

:LOT 608
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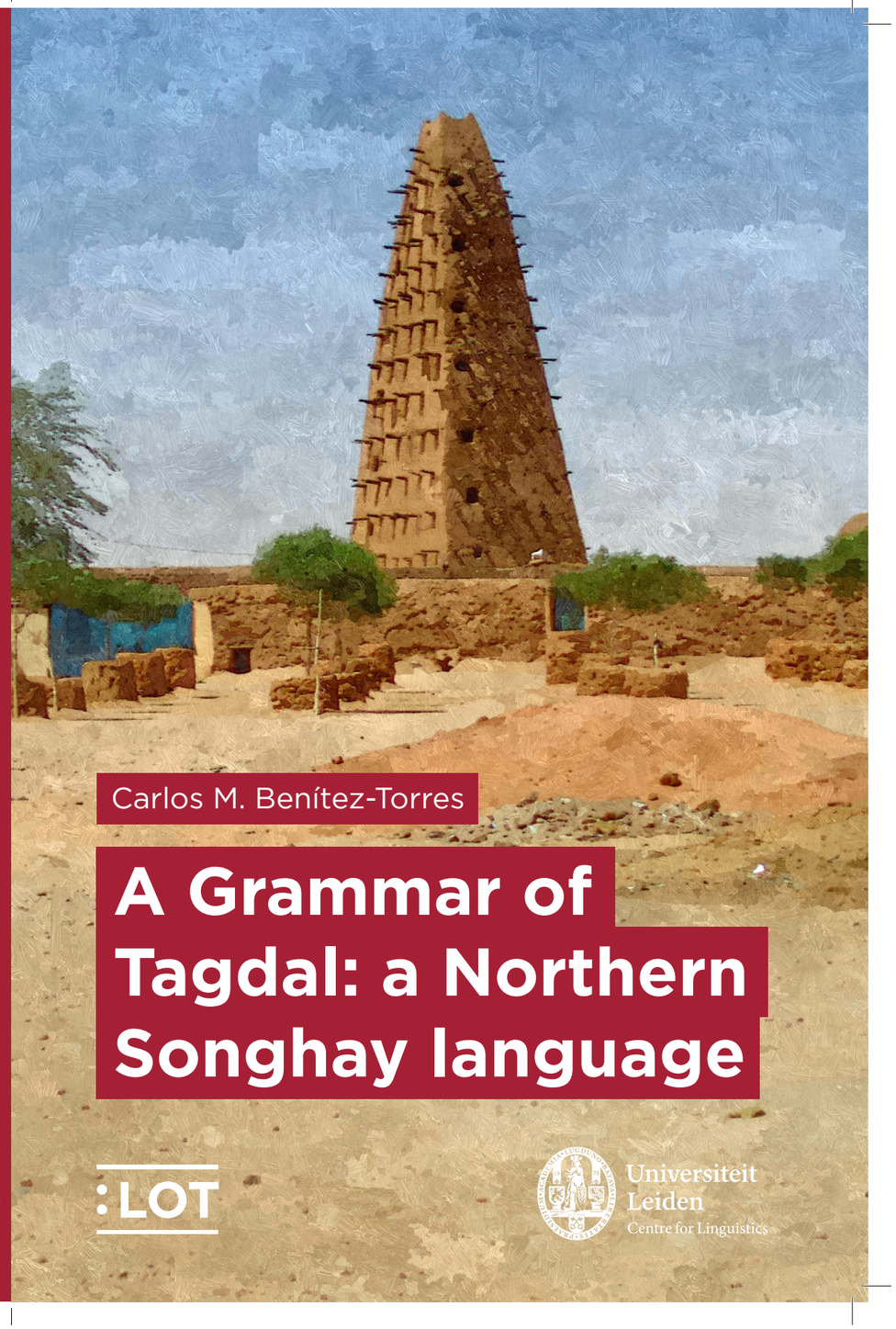

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